



Warriors wave farewell to 2004

Accomplishments, challenges highlight year for base

January

— Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, wants a more “fit to fight” Air Force and to accomplish this, the physical fitness standards and test are changed. Air Force members are now tested on a one-and-a-half mile run time, their waist circumference, push-ups and sit-ups.

February

— The 319th Logistic Readiness Squadron slipped by the 319th Operations Support Squadron 63-62 to win the intramural basketball championship. OSS won the first game 80-74, but to win the championship they had to beat LRS twice.

— Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Gerald Murray visited the base and spoke with the Warriors of the North.

March

— More than 100 members of Grand Forks Air Force Base, along with people from five other bases, traveled to Volk Field, Wisc., March 5 to 12 to participate in a war-fighting training exercise. “It allowed bases to train efficiently on the ability to survive and operate,” said Master Sgt. Richard Pasamante, 319th Air Refueling Wing inspector general’s office. “Everything is already in place at Volk Field. Members just show up and play.”

April

— The 319th Civil Engineer Squadron environmental management flight won two 2003 Air Mobility Command awards – the Gen. Thomas D. White Pollution Prevention Award and the Gen. Thomas D. White National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, Compliance Team Award.

— Military spouses have always played a crucial role in support of military activities. Now a new program – the Key Spouse Program coordinated through the family support center – serves as another unit commander resource to enhance mission readiness. The program helps families adapt to the unique demands of military life.

May

— The 319th Operations Support Squadron dominated the 319th Civil Engineering Squadron’s A team 4-0 in the intramural soccer championships.

— Base officials held a tornado response exercise in the mid-morning hours and by the evening, the base tornado sirens were sounding for the real thing as tornadoes touched down in areas within 16 miles of the base.

June

— Refurbished aircraft tail #61-0299 was unveiled. Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th Air Refueling Wing commander, contrasted the aircraft refurbishment process to that of a ‘57 Chevy. While noting the aircraft was a 1961 model, he said a restored car is treated with much care and not used regularly while the refurbished aircraft is a “weapon of war” and used around the world supporting the Global War on Terrorism.

— The 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron sets a world-wide benchmark with Standard Asset Tracking System. SATs improves warehouse efficiency by tracking all items via bar codes and radio links

— Five 28th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron maintainers worked for over 24 hours replacing a faulty F-108 engine on a KC-135 engine, a process home station crews on shift work take up to a week to complete. The engine, which failed during flight, caused the aircrew to call an in-flight emergency and return to base with three of the four engines running.

July

— Ribbon cutting for the new commissary. The new commissary is over 50,000 square feet and replaces the previous one which was 43 year old. “It boasts a bigger deli/bakery section and a spacious produce department,” said Roy Hunnewell, commissary director. “There is also more frozen and chill space and more items to choose from.”



Photo by Tech Sgt. Anthony Tyrell

Airman 1st Class Kevin Rondeau, 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, marshals a KC-135 Stratotanker during an Operational Readiness Evaluation held at Grand Forks Air Force Base Dec. 1 and 2. The evaluation tested the 319th Air Refueling Wing’s ability to respond quickly to wartime taskings.

See “2004” on Page 2

Base members help preserve history

The Veteran's History Project interviews are first-hand experiences of past wars

By Airman 1st Class James Croxon
Public affairs

Five volunteers from Grand Forks Air Force Base worked with members of the North Dakota Heritage Center on the Veteran's History Project interview and photographing local veterans Dec. 12.

Maj. Craig Gaddis, 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS) commander, was the base lead for the project, which included: Capt. Jason Schafer, 319th Maintenance Squadron,

Capt. Jeff Johns, 319th AMXS, 2nd Lt. Jacob Sullivan 319th Maintenance Group, and Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Vital, 319th AMXS.

The volunteers interviewed 13 veterans from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War at the East Grand Forks, Minn., Veteran's of Foreign Wars Post.

"These stories will illuminate individuals' experiences, enhance the understanding of these eras, and provide bridges between generations," said Larry. L. Wegleitner, a North Dakota

state project coordinator.

Those stories include that of Herman Livingston who served in World War II and flew 35 combat missions and Charles Jacob who served in both World War II and the Korean War.

Mr. Wegleitner plans to come back to the Grand Forks and surrounding area in the upcoming months to conduct more interviews.

Interviews are conducted all over the state on a continuous basis. According to Mr. Wegleitner, anyone Veteran can conduct an interview for the project at any time.

For information on the project see the Veteran's History Project website at <http://www.state.nd.us/hist/veterans/index>



Courtesy photo

Volunteers from the base collected information on local veterans for the Veteran's History Project. Like these pictures of Dean Engel who served on Pork Chop Hill during the Korean War.

"2004" from Page 1

— Despite the overcast skies and limited aerial demonstrations, the base opened its gates after six-years for Friends and Neighbors Day. Over 10,000 people attended the event.

August

— The 319th Medical Group held an In-Place Patient Decontamination Capability demonstration to showcase the base's homeland defense capabilities. This system protects medical treatment facilities from becoming contaminated.

— With a symbolic ticket tear, Operation Enduring Friendship, the partnership between Grand Forks Air Force Base, the Grand Cities, University of North Dakota and the North Valley Arts Council was renewed for its second year. OEF originally kicked off in May of 2003. This joint venture provides military members and their families with free or discounted tickets to UND athletic events and community events such as plays, festivals and other arts venues in the area. Last year OEF contributed more than \$180,000 in free or discounted tickets to military members.

— The aircraft maintenance community's version of the "perfect game" is the "black letter initial" launch. A black letter initial launch occurs when an aircraft takes off without any open write-ups or delayed discrepancies. Delayed discrepancies are entries in the aircraft maintenance forms that document minor flyable discrepancies that require either aircraft down time or supply support to resolve. By those standards, the 319th Maintenance Group pitched a "perfect game" twice. To top off the accomplishment, both aircraft landed without a discrepancy.

— Fifty new senior NCO units open for occupants. The units, located on Beech Street, are the next step in the complete rebuilding of all the houses on base.

September

— Around The World In Ninety Days - Air Mobility Command and Air Force Space Command's summer promotion - ended Aug. 30, but the Warriors of the North put a \$25,000 exclamation point on the end. Grand Forks Air Force Base won the 2004 ATWIND Flight Plan competition.

October

— The base clinic passed four days of intensive inspections by two different teams. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and an Air Force Health Services Inspection team evaluated everything from quality and

safety of patient care to proper adherence to Air Force Instructions and war-time readiness. Both teams were satisfied by their findings.

— The Warriors of the North closed fiscal year 2004 with a total of 32,444 flying hours and 5,652 sorties while planning, supporting, and executing the 319th Air Refueling Wing's global mission of air refueling, airlift, aeromedical evacuation, and expeditionary combat support.

— The 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron captures the flag football championship by defeating the 319th Security Forces Squadron.

November

— The 319th Air Refueling Wing held its first Wingman Day. Wingman Day is a day to reinforce wingman culture; a culture where Airmen take care of Airmen.

— The first base Family Member Deployment Line mimicked that of an actual deployment line. The deployment line processed 196 Twining Elementary School fourth-sixth graders at Liberty Square.

December

— After being a part of the 319th Security Forces Squadron for nearly two years, the Army National Guard's 141st Engineer Combat Battalion members were relieved of duty.

— The base will soon house NASA's DC-8 Airborne Laboratory for the University of North Dakota. The announcement came from Dr. Charles Kupchella, UND president, at a press conference. The DC-8 Airborne Laboratory will move from NASA's Dyden Flight Research Center, Edwards AFB, Calif., in March 2005.

— For two days, air crew, security forces, maintainers, logisticians, and hundreds of other base personnel in dozens of different specialties jointed together to participate in the 319th Air Refueling Wing's last major exercise of the year, an Operational Readiness Evaluation that tested the wing's ability to rapidly respond to wartime taskings.

— News of a \$742,300 emergency repair grant put the wheels in motion for improvements at Carl Ben Eielson Elementary School during the meeting of the Grand Forks Air Force Base School Board. The Impact Aid Construction Grant will be used to repair the roof, windows, glass block wall components, fire alarm systems, and an intercom system.

Honor guard...serving the base with pride

By Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke
Public affairs

It's a cold and cloudy day in November. The crowd is a somber one. That day, they put to rest an active duty member who died while serving his country.

An Airman carries the freshly-folded flag over to the bereaved widow. She sits, openly crying, pain and sadness evident on her face.

He stands in front of her, showing no expression, and says, "Ma'am, on behalf of the President of the United States, the Department of the Air Force and a grateful nation, I present you with this flag in honor of your Airmen's honorable and faithful service to his country."

He does a clean about face and rejoins the rest of the funeral party. It takes a dedicated person to flawlessly perform amidst such adversity.

Ten Airmen here joined the elite ranks of the base honor guard Dec. 10 at the honor guard building.

The honor guard's primary mission is

to support Air Force Funerals, serving the Air Force's second largest area of responsibility, going as far as Devil's Lakes, N.D., to the very tip point of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The honor guard here serves veterans of the Army Air Corps, Army Air Forces and retired and active duty Air Force.

The Honor Guard can also be seen posting and retiring the nation's colors at ceremonies such as retirements and changes of command and other events on base and in the community.

"Any military person can join the honor guard," said Senior Airman Eric Gann, base honor guard. "They just need to be sharp and exceed all standards of the dress and appearance Air Force instruction."

The members who just graduated went through the one-week training course to certify them on the many different movements that must be perfected.

"The practice wasn't easy," said Airman 1st Class Dereck Hutcherson, 319th Civil Engineer Squadron. "It was

very tedious. Everything had to be perfect and if there was something we didn't understand they would work with us to get it."

Airman Matthew Donavon, 905th Air Refueling Squadron, originally came to practices because his friend was a member.

"It looked interesting and like something I could really do," he said.

While in the week-long training class, a potential honor guard member is released from his original duty section to practice for the entire week.

"We understand the position that duty sections are put in when we request their Airmen for three days for a funeral 900 miles away," said Airman Gann. "And we appreciate their support."

Last year, the honor guard rendered honors at more than 110 funerals and posted and retired the colors at more than 100 ceremonies.

Airmen who join the honor guard join for different reasons but the type of Airmen who join all share the same goal: perfection.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke

An honor guard member checks for perfection after folding a flag. Honor guard members learn more than 600 movements during their training.

"We don't just take anyone; we want the best," said Airman Gann

Mock 'war' puts wing's skills to test

By Capt. Michael Meridith
Public Affairs

For two days in December, a new war came to Grand Forks Air Force Base. Security forces stood ready to defend against terrorist attack while maintainers and aircrew raced to prepare their aircraft for rapid launch.

The 319th Air Refueling Wing's last major exercise of the year, an Operational Readiness Evaluation held Dec. 1 and 2, "tested the wing's ability to respond quickly to wartime taskings," said Maj. Charles Huhtala, who led the cell that planned and evaluated the exercise.

"We try to do these at least once a quarter," Major Huhtala explained, adding "they [the exercises] allow us to stretch our muscles by carrying out our wartime tasks quickly and in the face of lots of hurdles."

Those hurdles were both planned and unplanned. A winter storm during the exercise meant maintainers had to contend not only with the urgent pace set by the exercise scenario but also with icy winds and several inches of snow. "We were required to keep the aircraft free of

snow all night long," explained Master Sgt. Brad Ortzman, exercise maintenance production superintendent.

"That was even more of a challenge because a lot of our folks are pretty new and inexperienced. Even so, our people showed a real sense of urgency and performed extremely well despite the elements," Master Sgt. Ortzman added.

The weather also made things more difficult for security forces, who were on watch for possible simulated terrorist attacks against the base or its aircraft.

"The whole experience was very challenging," said Master Sgt. Gary Lee, security forces area supervisor for the exercise. "Not only did the weather make surveillance difficult, but we also had a lot of new people who had to be trained." Sergeant Lee said that in spite of the difficulties, he was satisfied with the performance of security forces, adding "If nothing else, we got the satisfaction that no matter what was thrown at us, we were ready. All the aircraft took off safely and that's what matters."

In addition to the challenges offered by the weather, planners also allowed units to include

their own inputs in the exercise scenario. The result was an expansion of its training value and another level of challenge for participants.

"It's the nature of the exercise that at certain times there may be lulls in the action. During these times, unit inputs allowed us opportunities to further test the wing's capabilities and reactions," said Major Huhtala.

For aircrews, the exercise offered an invaluable opportunity to apply lessons learned throughout the year.

"The biggest benefit was the experience it gave our crews," said Capt. Tim Mach, an aircraft commander during the exercise. "A lot of what we did during the exercise mirrors what we do day to day. However, there are still things that are different, and this was a great way to practice those skills."

Although the exercise cell is still evaluating the results, Major Huhtala says he was pleased with what he saw during the exercise. He noted the wing was able to achieve its primary objectives of a quick personnel recall and rapid preparation and launch of aircraft with no injuries.

"What it comes down to is knowing the mission

